

AVMA Survey on Pet Ownership in the U.S.

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The AVMA (American Veterinarian Medical Association) released the results of a survey that was conducted in January 2002. The AVMA was interested in retrieving information for the survey for the time period between December 31, 2000 to December 31, 2001. 80,000 households were randomly selected to fill out a survey. Of the 80,000 surveys sent out, more than 54,000 (67.8%) individuals responded. The survey contained questions regarding rates of pet ownership, the demographics of households that own pets, the use of veterinarians, and expenditures for veterinary medical services. Seven groups of animals were specifically listed: dogs, cats, pet birds, horses, fish, ferrets, and rabbits.

Results of the survey showed that nationally, 58.3% of all US households owned at least 1 pet at some time during 2001. Overall companion animal ownership has remained stable since 1996, whereas the total number of dogs and cats owned, and the average number per household has increased. Dog, cat, and horse ownership has increased substantially (Figure 1). Households that owned dogs, cats, birds, or horses also commonly owned another species of pet. Six of 10 pet-owning households own more than one pet, nearly a fourth owned two pets, and approximately a fifth owned more than five pets. According to the survey results, nearly 50.8% of all US households own dogs, cats, or both. More households own dogs, however, cats are the most common household pets. This is because many households had more than one cat as a pet.

Lastly, the survey results revealed that the total population of some specialty and exotic pets, such as nonpet birds (e.g., doves, pigeons, and poultry), snakes, and hamsters, has decreased since 1996, while others, such as ferrets, had increased (see Table 1).

The "U.S. Pet Ownership and Demographic Sourcebook" may be purchased from the AVMA's Center for Information Management at a cost of \$40.00 for AVMA members, \$79.50 to the general public, and \$57.00 to libraries. Call 1-847-925-8070 extension 297 to order for more information.

Figure 1. Populations of dogs, cats, horses, and birds in U.S. households for the years 1991, 1996, and 2001

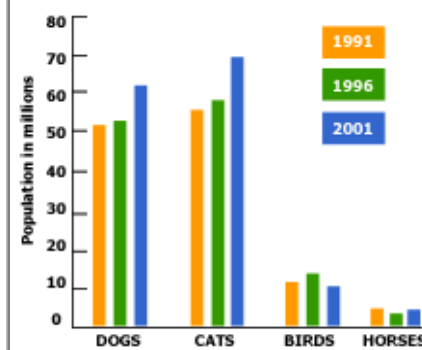


Table 1. Specialty and exotic pets in U.S. households during 1991, 1996, and 2001

Animal Type	1991		1996		2001	
	Mean No. per Household Owning that Pet	Total population (X 1,000)	Mean No. per Household Owning that Pet	Total population (X 1,000)	Mean No. per Household Owning that Pet	Total population (X 1,000)
Fish	9.1	23,997	8.9	55,554	7.7	49,251
Ferrets	1.5	275	2.0	791	2.1	991
Rabbits	3.2	4,574	2.6	4,940	2.7	4,813
Hamsters	1.4	1,316	1.9	1,876	1.2	881
Guinea Pigs	1.8	838	1.9	1,091	1.2	629
Gerbils	2.2	619	2.8	764	1.9	319
Other Rodents	2.3	875	2.4	1,053	2.5	786
Turtles	1.9	708	1.8	950	1.7	1,070
Snakes	3.9	735	4.1	900	2.1	661

Lizards	1.7	314	1.6	705	1.3	545
Other Reptiles	3.0	281	2.8	924	1.9	598
Other Birds*	13.8	5,220	13.2	4,423	9.2	2,894
Livestock	7.1	3,371	11.6	6,083	5.6	2,936
All others	3.4	638	3.3	1,225	2.4	2,013
* Pigeons, doves, and poultry						

All of these roundworms are widely distributed in North America. They are of considerable importance in young animals and in kennels. Because they can cause disease in humans, they are also very important to our health as well.